

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed and considered the Final Rejection as stated in the pending Office Action mailed on March 18, 2004 and the references cited therewith. Claims 1 and 3 are presently amended. In addition, new claims 21-26 are added. Claims 11-20 presently stand withdrawn as directed to the non-elected invention. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application to seek patent protection for the non-elected invention.

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 6-9 stand finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) or 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) under von Wedel et al. '587.

Claims 3, 5 and 10 are objected to as being based on a rejected claim and would be considered allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In response to these grounds of rejection, independent claim one has been revised to include the subject matter of objected claim 3. Newly submitted independent claim 21 includes the subject matter of claim 1 and objected to claim 5. Newly submitted independent claim 24 includes the subject matter of claim 1 and objected to claim 10. Because the combination of revised and newly submitted claims include the subject matter of the objected to claims 3, 5 and 10, it is respectfully asserted that independent claims 1, 21 and 24 are each patentable over the cited prior art. It is for this reason that it is requested that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) and, in the alternative, 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

The revision of originally filed claim 1 and newly submitted claims 21-26 do not raise any new issues After Final Rejection and the sole purpose of this Amendment after Final Rejection is to place the application in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the this Amendment after Final Rejection and that a Notice of Allowability be issued for all of the remaining claims under consideration.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at direct dial (321) 867-7214 if there are any questions regarding this Response or if prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.

Any additional charges necessary to prosecute this application are authorized to be drawn against Deposit Account 14-0116.

Date:

April 7, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

Randall M. Heald

Randall M. Heald
Patent Counsel, Kennedy Space Center
Reg. No. 28,561